192 [628 cont.]
527 The welcoming of joy: ying hsi (Chin.).

[Pages 628-629 contain the notes given above as numbered footnotes.]

[630] 4. The Age-blessing*

527
778
888

* See "Notes," pp. 634-635 [of the foreign text]. [In the translation these notes are given as numbered footnotes following the designations for them in the text.]

Report

[792] Old people, men and women, invite the lama to bless and instruct them. This is a great family festival. It is prepared a long time in advance.

On a certain day acquaintances and relatives come and bring the old person presents and gratulate him. They are treated with tea and cake. There is singing and dancing and a [574] feast is held. The young people fetch the hutukhtu. When he arrives, the women of the village dance, and incense is burned in the yard. The hutukhtu blesses the guests at the feast and the old person.

In the afternoon the age-consecration is performed. The hutukhtu makes a number of tormas, which are carried off. Then the old person kneels on the felt mat before the hutukhtu, is blessed with holy water, receives instructions, and is girdled with a yellow sash. He then resembles a lay monk. The mother's [792] brother determines what compensation the hutukhtu is to receive. [465] The next morning the hutukhtu returns to his monastery.

The consecrated person must now observe special com- [785] mandments, must withdraw on the first and fifteenth of the month for meditation, and fast and pray. -- Not all people can afford this celebration, for it is very expensive.

[632 cont.]

527 candidate out into the yard and throw it away. The mother's
778 brother stays there, and after that only own children still appear.
888 They stand or kneel in the side room behind the person to be
792 consecrated and shut the door, because only a few people may be present. Only the person to be consecrated remains in the lama-room, kneeling before the kang.

The candidate for consecration now washes himself again in the manner described above, is again sprinkled with holy water, and has Tibetan barley thrown at him. The master of ceremonies takes an iron spoon, puts in it some of the red-hot material from the fire-basin of the lama, scatters pounded cypress incense on it, and the lama throws fragrant spices over
[783] it. The person to be consecrated is fumigated all around with this and is now completely pure. The hutukhtu gives the consecration prayer over him and instructs him regarding the com-
[785] mandments that he must observe from now on. These commandments relate to fasting, abstention, the prohibition against killing, prayer, etc. They vary somewhat for men and women. [633] The instruction is given in the Tujen language so that the candidate will understand it.

[292] Now follows the donning of the yellow sash. It is about a hand wide and four to five ells long. It is not supposed to be silk. Silk mixed with cotton is permitted, but usually it is cotton. The candidate must provide it himself. This sash lies before the hutukhtu on the kang table and is fumigated at the same time as the person to be consecrated. It is not sprinkled with holy water. The assisting lama places the sash over the candidate's left shoulder and ties it together under the right arm
[292] with a yellow string that has likewise been fumigated. The cloth has the same name as the loop of cloth that the lamas throw over the shoulder.

Since the consecration does not take place until late afternoon, it has meanwhile become evening. Only now does the hutukhtu partake of the main meal. In the yard, however, the guests gather around the fire, warm their liquor, and sing and dance into the night.

The next morning the hutukhtu performs his usual morn-
[465] ing prayers, drinks tea, and receives his prayer fee: several

[633 cont.]

527 back-baskets of bread, meat, money, etc. -- The guests have
778 already each received a piece of meat or fat and four pieces
888 of oil-baking after the feast the day before. The mother's
792 brother, the daughters' husbands, and their sons receive eight
[431] oil-loaves, a larger piece of meat, and a hada, for they
[465] brought the candidate more gifts than the others. -- After the morning meal the hutukhtu returns to his monastery. He is not accompanied, but the gifts are taken to the monastery for him. A large kettle of tea is donated for the monks there and lamp-butter for the temple gods (3).

3. [Foreign text p. 634.] From this it is apparent how expensive the age-consecration is. For this reason alone it is very much respected. I recall the case of a young man who organized this festival for his aged mother. The people said: "The poor wretch wants to ruin his fortune for the sake of such respect. That would-be-great." On the festive day itself, however, they eagerly participated.

778 Duties and privileges of the consecrated person: The conse-
888 crated person is regarded as a lay lama or lay nun. Therefore,
[792] after death he is solemnly cremated in the crematorium blessed
[766] by the hutukhtu. The hutukhtu who consecrated him receives 12 steamed loaves and three tagur loaves when his candidate's death is reported and must pray especially for him. He also usually performs the death ceremonies.

[784] Now for the rest of his life the consecrated person may no
[262] longer drink alcohol, smoke, eat eggs or the meat of animals that have died or chicken meat; he is only allowed to eat the meat of slaughtered animals. He must abstain from sexual
[785] intercourse and every month he must withdraw for meditation. This is done on the first and fifteenth day; they are fast days and days of meditation. Usually the eighth day of the month is also added. On these days he solemnly makes the

[633 cont.]

778 incense offering in the morning. Then he withdraws to the kang,
888 drinks "empty tea," that is, pure tea without additions and without
food. He meditates and prays on his mani-string. No one may
[785] disturb him, even when guests come; he likewise does not concern himself about anything. During this time he may not sleep. Also, he may not go into the temple or to the obo. Only in the afternoon does he partake of a meal, which, however, is better and more ample than usual (5).

[527] 5. [Foreign text pp. 634-635.] Concerning the whole affair, cf. Filchner, Kumbum, p. 199. The ceremony described here is much more detailed than there and also deviates somewhat. The name Upāsaka (or Upāsika) was not mentioned by the informant. Also, he did not know the prescriptions in detail. He did confirm, however, that after each commandment the candidate had to affirm that he would observe it. The old man had not had the consecration performed for him. The people regard the consecrated persons as lay gelong; one is reminded here of the similarity with the third order in the Christian Occident.

[792]

778 It is also clear from the commandments why young people are not considered for the consecration. To be sure, this consecration can be completed at any age at or after death; at that time even young people are no longer capable of transgressing the commandments. The age-consecration seems to be merely the last step of a series of consecrations of laymen which are undertaken parallel with the consecration stages of the lamas. The

[796]
[792]

[633 cont.]

[Note on foreign text pp. 634-635 cont.] The informant once mentioned a kind of baptism at which the džawdzi (Tib.) is prayed; in Chinese this prayer is called hsi-lien-ching, prayer of washing the face. Evidently the [635] ceremony observed by Filchner was such a boy's baptism; Om mani padme hum, loc. cit. Later there follows a second consecration for young people, which is called gãŋsgur (Tib.) (6) [see Note 6 below] after the corresponding prayer, in Chinese san-hun ching, prayer of the three souls. So the informant told me. Unfortunately I could no longer record these ceremonies.

Word List

Age-consecration: šge lama ndziala- = great lama-invitation.

Master of ceremonies: kãŋguo.

To fetch the hutukhtu: ġdzõ niwa (twice) (or dãŋwu, if the first time).

Mother's brother: nẽgã; achiu (Chin.); ayãŋ.

Mother's brother's son: ku-chiu (Chin.).

Sash: ġẽdzãn (Tib. loanword) (6).

6. [Foreign text p. 635.] gẽdzãn: Tibetan gazn = the yellow sash of the lama costume. -- gõŋsõn: Tib. dgoŋ = solitude, soŋ = to go away; meaning, "to go into solitude." -- gẽlõŋba: Tib. dge = virtue, sloŋ = to apply oneself, pa = belonging to; meaning, "one who applies himself to virtue." -- gesnien: Tib. dge = virtue, bsñen = to approach. -- gãŋsgur:

[633 cont.]

192
778
888
527

[Note on foreign text p. 635 cont.] Tib. dbaṅ = force, bskur = to consecrate, to transfer. This is a ceremony of the transference of force, at which each lama receives a secret name (Unkrig).

To admit to lama standing with prayer: gēsnien dzĕ̄wla-.

•[785] To observe a day of meditation: pi-chai (Chin.); gõṅsõṅ (Tib. loanword) (6) [see Note 6 above].

Member of the Yellow Church: gēlõṅba (Tib. loanword) (6) [see Note 6 above].

Pages 634-635 contain the notes given above as numbered footnotes.]

[635] 5. Customs concerning the Dead and Cremation*

000

* See "Notes," pp. 650-658 [of the foreign text]. [In the translation these notes are given as numbered footnotes following the designations for them in the text.]

Report

763 If someone is close to death, his clothes are taken off,
764 if he is wearing any on the kang. He is washed, shaved, or in the case of a woman the hair is dressed, and tied in a crouching position immediately after the last breath. A piece of cloth is thrown over the shoulder, which is the sole garment of the dead.

764 Then he is put in a death-box, which looks like a portable house, and propped up with straw. The box is placed on the floor in a room, and the closest relatives hold a death-watch there. At each meal the people bring some of the food in front of the death-box, burn paper, and kowtow. Each

in front of all the spirits invited the day before, talking with them and asking for their protection upon the village. The guardian of the temple, acting as representative of the whole village, kneels behind them with incense sticks in his joined hands, answering and repeating the prayers. The rite lasts for about an hour.

Around ten o'clock a lunch is served to the shamans and wine is poured in profusion. All the villagers, dressed in their festival best, flock to the temple to attend the ceremony of the possession of the chief of the shamans by the White Tiger spirit.

For a long time the shamans play and have fun. While the apprentices beat drums and cymbals, they start dancing; they get excited, display all kinds of acrobatics; dance on their knees holding their heels in their hands; dance on their heads; turn cartwheels; keep whirling; jostle one another. They are stimulated to compete with one another in accomplishing the queerest eccentricities. It is not unusual for a couple to get into a quarrel and start fighting and for one or another to fall down in a fainting fit.

When the excitement reaches fever pitch, the chief of the shamans exchanges his cap of the god of the Five Roads for the black cap with long tail. With his arm nude, the whip fixed into the collar, drum in hand, he starts a wild dance which lasts for a long time. He stops once in a while and cracks the whip. He takes threatening and aggressive attitudes, brawls loudly and indistinctly, and grins, distorting mouth and jaw bone. With his whole body writhing and supposed to be possessed by the White Tiger spirit, he cuts his arm with a razor, making it bleed. The women rush to the shaman and apply paper to the wound. These papers are efficacious talismans for the protection of children, and are sewn on their clothes by their mothers. In former times, old Monguors said, potent shamans pierced their cheeks with an arrow and bent the blade of a sword predicting the future with wonderful accuracy, but today shamans can no longer do that. These rites are in line with the activities of Wu and shamans.[5]

GREETING OF THE GODDESS OF JOY

Around two o'clock the rite of *ying hsi-niang* is performed, the meeting with, and the greeting of, the Goddess of Joy. This rite is purely shamanistic. The Chinese perform a similar but more quiet rite, on New Year's day, meeting and greeting the "spirit" of joy. Monguor youngsters like to imitate the Chinese and enjoy the same merriment. However, the real Monguor rite is the following one performed by the shaman:

On the large threshing floor of the village is placed a table with offerings. The villagers sit around the edges of the floor in order that the shaman may have room for the performance and the evolutions. All the shamans wear the black cap with long tail, and keeping

[5] De Groot, *op. cit.*, 1212. [p. 109 (B)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

When the building of the walls was finished, the images having been smoked beforehand, and blessed with ritual water, and having had rice thrown upon them, were stored inside. Finally a roof covered the construction and a verandah with some prayer wheels was built around it, with an oven in front for Wei-sang. Each lama received from the Hutukhtu, as remuneration for the molding of images, a piece of cloth large enough to make a new lama costume. 731 782

When, at the time of epidemics, the Om Manis and circumambulations have seemed ineffective, the people conclude that the Bumkhang has lost its energy, and a new rite is enacted in order to strengthen its impaired capacities. The Red lamas are again invited. They read texts for seven days, and thrust a new stake in the ground before the Bumkhang, at night, while the people howl. They act exactly in the same way as the shamans who strengthen debilitated hail mounds. Because this act is not seldom performed for old Bumkhangs of villages, it seems to suggest that all the Bumkhangs in the country were built on the same pattern. This was the only Bumkhang built during my stay in the country, but old Monguors told me that all the Bumkhangs were constructed in the same way, not in order to be endowed with blessings, but in order to avert calamities plotted by evil spirits, and to block the way along which the bad influxes enter the village. The facts (1) of circumambulating in a counter-clockwise direction, (2) the way of building the Bumkhang, (3) the use of the heterogeneous items, (4) the thrusting of the stake god into it, and (5) the manner of strengthening the impaired magical power of the Bumkhang all over the country, seem to support the assumption that the Bumkhang built at Erh-ku-lung by order of the T'u-kuan Hutukhtu, a lama of the Yellow Sect, and all the other Bumkhangs follow thoroughly magical rites belonging to the same category as the rites performed on the hail mounds built by the shamans. 731 782 789

It is noteworthy that no urns are buried inside the Bumkhang and that no pole is set up inside of it, to represent the "pillar of Heaven." A couple of beams support the roof of the small building, but the magical stake god is thrust into the center of the building amidst the 100,000 clay Buddha figures.

This description does not tally with the interesting study of Dom. Schröder (p. 266). It is recorded according to my notes written at the time when the Bumkhang of Erh-ku-lung was built, and investigations were made concerning these buildings existing in the country. [114]

FASTING RITES AMONG THE MONGUORS

Fasting is practiced in the country situated north of the Hsining River by lamas of the Yellow and the Red Sects and by laymen; shamans are not interested in fasting exercises. At Erh-ku-lung the rite is compulsory for all lamas. It starts on the twenty-ninth 785 792

[p. 133(A)]

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

of the fifth month and lasts for 108 days. During the whole period, two lamas at a time are always fasting (taking one meal a day), while the others are free to indulge in food, but during the 108 days the use of meat, garlic, leeks, and radishes is prohibited for all the lamas. Lamas of the Red Sect north of the Hsining River do not perform fasting in a group of their own sect, but always some among them attend the fasting rites practiced by laymen.

The fast of laymen is an interesting custom, the consequences of which have an important bearing on the formation of the Buddhist frame of mind of the people. The aim of the rite is the purification of sins and happy rebirth in the paradise of one of the Buddhas.

ORGANIZATION AND RULES

The rite is enacted in a group, in a few temples spread over the country, under the direction of a lama of the Yellow Sect, usually a Living Buddha or an old lama celebrated for his proficiency in oratory. At present the fasting exercises are only practiced in six localities, among which four are old Karwas (dating from the Ming period): Tsan-tsa, Pe-cha-erh-te, Marhtsang and Swor. The two others are Sumdo and T'u-kuan. The fasting exercises are never performed for laymen in monasteries. Each of the six groups has its committee which, long before the fixed time, tries to enroll fasters: Monguors, Tibetans, even Chinese, lamas of the Red Sect, men and women. In Sumdo the fasters usually number from twenty to eighty; in Pe-cha-erh-te from ten to thirty; in Marhtsang from ten to thirty; in Swor from twenty to seventy. In 1916 in Pe-cha-erh-te, I met seventeen fasters; in Marhtsang twenty-one. The Monguors of Wei-yüan-p'u and of the northern part of the Hung nai Valley are said to be the most fervent fasters. Always, a large number of men, even chiefs and elders of villages, attend the rite.

During the whole exercise, the fasters do not spend any money. The fast expenses are defrayed by the villagers of the locality where the exercises are held, and by the committee which has a small fund and collects some alms. To contribute to this rite is considered to be a very meritorious act. The day before the beginning of the fast, the chief of the village imposes corvées on some of the youngsters for the carrying of water, chopping of fuel, preparing cypress boughs, grinding flour, cooking, baking rolls and steaming bread, buying butter, tea, sugar, sweeping the floor. At Tsan tsa the fast starts on the fifteenth of the sixth month; at other places usually around the twenty-ninth of the third moon, and lasts for sixteen days. During the three days preceding the fast, the fasters are not allowed to eat garlic, leeks, radishes or meat, or to drink wine, or smoke tobacco, and continence is required.

The fasters arrive at night, drink tea, eat rolls baked in vegetable oil and go to rest. Men and women have separate rooms; they sleep on straw and cover them-

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

selves at night only with their own clothes. Before dawn the conch shell trumpet is blown, and all arise and wash their faces and hands. A youngster comes and pours some water in their cupped hands, with which faces and hands are cleansed. The fingers pass across the hair and toilet is done. In the meantime, a big cypress fire is kindled in the courtyard and the fasters cause the smoke to enter their large sleeves and gowns, whereupon the body is supposed to be ritually purified.[13] The lama director, helped by Red lamas or laymen, kneads flour of roasted spelt with butter, makes three ritual *tormas* with the dough, and disposes them on the altar before the Buddha picture for two days. Then they are thrown away and three new ones take their place. In front of the picture, 108 butter lamps burn all day during the whole rite; 108 cups are displayed containing the ritual holy water and a flower, along with two high vessels, one of them containing pure water and the other sugar water. In the temple, men kneel behind the lama and the women behind the men. The lama starts reading the texts, which very few among the fasters are able to read with him, but it is said that the merits of devoutly listening to texts which are not understood are exactly the same. He explains the rules to be observed in order to obtain the merits of the rites. The fasting exercises are to be performed at least for two consecutive days; it would be better to perform them for more days, and it would be best of all to persevere to the end. Several fasters drop away after two days, others start again a few days later, many attend the exercises of the first and of the last two days, but all of them have to attend the meal at every noon, attend the lecture in the afternoon, and sleep in the temple every night. In the meantime, the absentees visit neighbors or bask in the sunshine.

On the days of silence, it is strictly forbidden to talk, lest all the merits of the fast be lost. Except at meal time, it is strictly forbidden to swallow anything, even saliva; the whole day the noise of spitting never stops. During the sixteen days, it is strictly forbidden to kill any living being. In the sunshine, whole rows of fasters are seen searching in their clothes for vermin and putting them on the ground with devotion. It is strictly forbidden to take a nap during the sixteen days, or to go home.

After the explanation of the rules, the exercises start. The director blesses the sugar water, and reads some texts; a servant pours a few drops of sugar water into the hands of each of the fasters, who swallow it devoutly. Holding in his hand a cypress bough dipped in pure water, the servant sprinkles some drops in their hands which they swallow and spit on the floor. It is called *chiap*, which means the ritual cleansing of the tongue and the mouth. Then follows a strict command against moving, and the servant pours milk tea,

[13] Granet, *Danses et légendes*, *op. cit.*, 383. Purification by smoke was well known in old China.

[p. 134(A)]

with discretion, into the cup which every faster holds hidden in his gown. Then follows a new chiap and the mouth is purified. The first exercise is finished and the fasters go into the courtyard to have a talk. 795 785 792

At nine o'clock there is a second meeting in the temple. Prayers are said by the lama, followed by 108 Om Mani said over the beads, with devotion, in a slow tempo. The recitation of the Om Manis constitutes the basis of every gathering. This time there is no instruction or preaching, but again the rite of sugar water and chiap is performed.

At eleven, the same exercise is held in the temple as at nine o'clock, and immediately thereafter they have the only meal of the day, which consists of milk tea and rolls boiled in oil, followed by the ritual chiap. According to the rules the meal has to be finished before noon.

At the three o'clock meeting in the temple, the director gives prayers and preaching which may last for two or more hours; there is no sugar water, and no chiap. Then the fasters go to the courtyard for a talk. When the sun has set, they gather in the temple. There are no more prayers, but sugar water and chiap, milk tea at discretion, again sugar water and chiap. At dusk the fasters enter their respective dormitories, and strict silence is observed.

The second day is one of strict silence. At dawn, they meet in the temple, for prayers and Om Manis. The sugar water on that day is not swallowed but rubbed on the hair. There is no chiap. After the meeting, the fasters bask in the sun, reciting Om Manis, or turning the prayer wheels. At nine o'clock the same performance is held as in the morning, and sugar water is rubbed on the hair. There is no chiap. At eleven, the same rites are held as at nine o'clock, and the same meal is held as on the first day. At the three o'clock meeting they have prayers and preaching, and put sugar water on the hair; at sunset the same rite is held as on the first evening.

On the third day, after the morning rites, it is permissable to speak, and the rites are the same as on the first day. At noon the menu is changed, and noodles and milk tea are served.

The rites on the fourth day are the same as those of the second day, with strict silence, and so on, for sixteen days. During the whole fasting time, Wei-sang is not practiced, but every morning a big cypress fire is built in order to smoke the body.

According to the fasters, the observance of the rules is very difficult. Although the Monguors are used to eating whenever they like, the whole day long, they say that the single meal is the least part of the problem; the worst parts are the terrible regularity of the schedule and the deadening silence. This is quite understandable, especially as the rites last for sixteen days. No wonder that young people are not fond of the rite, and that mostly older, devout, and religious-minded people, and

[p. 154 (B)]

people who have taken the Buddhist vows, are the usual practitioners.

TOPICS OF THE INSTRUCTIONS

Each year I seized every opportunity to get information from fasters concerning that captivating subject, and asked the children in the schools about what grandpa or grandma had said about the lama director, the topics of the preachings, the anecdotes narrated, the number of fasters. Every time the fasters reported that they were happy to have performed the exercises, although they had had a hard time. They had prayed in a group innumerable Om Manis, which had caused them to have a real feeling of happiness, and they had enjoyed the preaching. They seemed to be better Lamaists than before, for they spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences. Without doubt the fast rites had helped buoy them up and had given them zest for life.

However, it was always said that the directors of the exercises were not all interesting talkers, that some were really boring men, but that they all loved Li, the old Living Buddha of Erh-ku-lung. Every year, at three places at least, he was invited, and the fasters urged that the date of the exercises be postponed, in order to enjoy the old man's direction since he had endeared himself to the hearts of the people. He was an intelligent old Living Buddha, a picture of benevolence, with a great kind face, molded on pontifical lines, and all set for hearty smiles. He was a wonderful storyteller, with sparkling wit and a fetching sense of humor, who had the knack of keeping the fasters listening for two and three hours every day. He expounded his doctrine by means of anecdotes and unusual comparisons, which his uncultivated listeners could grasp, remember, and tell to others. He was a fine teacher.

The beloved topic of his talk was the life of Buddha, who fled from the luxurious palace of his illustrious parents; his terrifying mortifications and his endless charity, even for tigers and other animals, so that he had allowed himself to be devoured by the hungry tigress in order that she might nourish her cubs; his refusal to enter paradise, in order to remain in and save the world. Another topic was the paradise of Buddha and its oriental splendor where everybody hoped to go eventually; and also that of the eighteen hells, with all the terrifying torments used in the Orient. He used to put stress, in nearly every talk, on the omniscience of the terrible but equitable judge of death, who accepts no bribes, who knows all the merits and demerits of everyone; whose mill of justice grinds, in the most minute way, all our acts and intentions.

All the children knew that the poor in this world are people who are suffering, for their lack of charity in former existences, or for their covetousness or injustices. The topic of the punishments for injustices was one of those most elaborately developed by all the

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

directors of the exercises, and their stock of punish- 785
ments for injustices never seemed to be exhausted. 829
People who committed injustices had to repair their 869
faults by being a servant, in their future life, of the person who had suffered on their account, or of being reborn as a donkey, a horse, or an ox, plowing their fields, carrying fertilizer, or harvesting. Even the slightest injustices are not overlooked by the terrible judge, for in order to repair the smallest injustices he makes men and women transmigrate into a hen, laying eggs for years, in behalf of the person who suffered because of them. The topic of reparation for injustices seemed to be an obsession of all the preachers, who seldom hinted at other questions of morals, and so the feeling concerning the widespread rite of repairing injustices, among laymen as well as lamas, and even Hutukhtus, becomes understandable. Never did they hint at the shamanist rites performed in private families.

The topic of the old Li, concerning gentle behavior 538
with animals, was the delight of the fasters, who every year asked him to tell again the marvelous anecdotes he had stored in his repertory concerning the subject, for in his lively telling even old chestnuts took on a new glow. The keen interest of nomads in their animals is a matter of common knowledge. Since the Monguors still love their animals in the way of their ancestors, it is no wonder that they asked for that topic, and that they adored the old Li, whose talks hit straight at their hearts. Below are some of his well-known examples.

In India, an old Living Buddha went every day to 539
preach in monasteries and explain texts. He rode an old elephant which, while the religious exercises of his master lasted, knelt devoutly, listening before the temple gate. The old Living Buddha loved all animals with effusion, and especially his faithful elephant. When the elephant died, the Living Buddha made it reincarnate in a strong boy belonging to a poor family. The heavy boy had the exact gait of an elephant, a big, oval long head, unusually long nose and ears, and an appetite as voracious as that of an elephant. No room was left for doubt; the elephant had reincarnated in a human being. The boy, at the age of seven, became the beloved apprentice of the old Living Buddha. After a few years, the master and his apprentice died at the same time. The reincarnation of the holy man was found in a boy endowed with the same characteristics as an elephant, but in addition he had on the palms of both hands and the soles of his feet the marks of the Buddhist "wheel of life," the characteristic of Living Buddhas. This boy was the genuine incarnation of the holy man who had loved the elephant to such an extent. The new Buddha became as celebrated over all India for his elephant features as for his universal charity, which extended not only to human beings, but even to all animals.

Also in India, a holy lama, very fond of animals, squatted under a tree from dawn to dusk, year after

[p. 135 (B)]

village started ridiculing and deprecating him. Buddha could not stand this, and made five tongues protrude out of the chief's mouth and made him fall dead on the spot, after which the village became a barren waste. 539

Another of the Living Buddha's topics, several times repeated to me, was that all the Monguor and Tibetan tribes would disappear, many families already being without male issue. The reason, he said, is that nearly all the departed already dwell in paradise and wait there for us, so that now the faster Monguors and Tibetans disappear, the sooner paradise will be furnished with happy inhabitants. "Make your sons become lamas," he would say, "for lamas surely arrive in paradise. However, among the dying, only those who, at the very moment of their death, trust in Buddha may hope to be reborn in a lotus near Buddha, where for thousands of years they will be happy, and where all the inhabitants will be taller and stronger and more beautiful than we are here."

Such are the topics of most of the preaching during the fast exercises. Many times the fasters repeated that they loved the old Li because after every preaching he made them crave for pardon for all their sins, and because he could say the Om Manis over his beads with a wonderful unction. He had touched the hearts of the people. 538

IMPACT OF THE FASTING RITES UPON MONGUOR SOCIETY

Although these exercises were only attended by a relatively small number of older people, their impact upon the families cannot be overestimated, because the old people repeated at home the topics of the lectures and the anecdotes, and because, since the authority with which the old people are vested in a patriarchal society is supreme, they cultivated in the orbit of the family the sense of religiosity; the habit of praying and of craving for pardon. Chiefs, and elders of villages who had attended the meetings, unconsciously and unwittingly were guided by these principles in the administration of the village and in the patching up of troubles. The impact was all the more important because, year after year, the exercises were repeated by the adored old Li, a man with an illustrious pedigree, a scion of the noble and wealthy family of the Li T'u-ssu. The old Li was a personality who provoked a revival of religious feeling in the country. 771 785 869

The anecdotes, ingenuously narrated in the schools by the children, had led me to make inquiries among the fasters themselves about the fast exercises, which before had seemed to me to be an unimportant institution, attended by old women without any bearing on the religious life of the communities. However, taking account of the overall number of the yearly participants in the six centers, and the number of men who attended them, even chiefs of villages and elders, and of the fact that in a patriarchal society the old people wield a supreme influence and also of the strong personality of

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

the old Li, I understood that for a people endowed with these religious convictions, Om Manis were the sheet anchor when things got stormy, and that they could fall on their knees and crave for pardon for their sins and pray, when hailstorms mistreated their means of subsistence. 771 785 869

Probably the fast exercises were, at that time, one of the mightiest means for promoting the religious feeling inherent in Lamaism. Although the lamas never preach for laymen, in the monasteries, and although a lama only has a talk with them once in a while about religion, and although there are no schools run by lamas, the people knew by means of these fasting exercises that an all-powerful being exists whom the lamas call Buddha, who is all benevolence and goodness, and ready to forgive and to help. They knew the difference between the good Buddhas and the spirits, among which some were really evil beings trying to harm them, and others were so touchy that a trifle could upset them. They knew that a terrible omniscient judge of death exists who controls heaven and the eighteen hells, who decides about their future, according to their acts. They knew that at death their existence was not finished.

However, if account be taken also of what the shamans say at the feasts of the communities and the magical performances enacted by them in behalf of the community and private families, their savage struggle with evil spirits, the ownership of the country and the villages by powerful spirits, the cult of the ancestors subject to decay, the importance of the hearth god and all the spirits who are considered to administer independently their own departments, with punishments or blessings, who are supposed to know the acts of the people and their feelings toward them, it is easy to understand also why a tremendous confusion should exist in their religious thought processes, and why they should act according to the circumstances in unforeseen and confusing ways.

PRODIGALITY OF THE MONGUORS CONCERNING CULT AND RELIGION

175 792

In 1914 a strong group of four or five hundred lamas, clad in rags and dirt, passed through the city of Hsining on the way to Seerkok. They were lamas of the Yellow Sect, belonging to different lamaseries situated south of the Yellow River. The whole country was upset. Rumors were spread concerning an impending revolt, organized by the lamas against the newly established Chinese Republic. Spies were sent all over the country in order to discover clues. After a few days the officials announced that the group had been invited by Seerkok in order to pray for blessings upon the Republic.

The fear of the lamas turned after a few days into a reputation for fantastic sainthood, and Monguors and Tibetans ran to Seerkok in order to offer gifts. The richest families competed with each other to provide the expenses for entertaining for one day these saintly

[p. 13>(A)]